have received a proposal from Government of Gujarat for extension of the period of repayment of loan granted to the State Government under the Scheme; and

(f) if so, what action has been taken by the Central Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) Under the Agricultural and Rural Debt Relief (ARDR) Scheme, 1990, as on 24.2.1992, a total number of 315.16 lakhs beneficiaries have been extended debt relief to the extent of Rs. 7714.14 crores all over the country.

(b) and (c) A request was received from the Government of Gujarat in September, 1990 that the ARDR Scheme may be extended to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes who have taken loans from State Government agencies like the Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes Development Corporations, Backward Classes Boards, etc. The ARDR Scheme was formulated by Government of India for providing debt relief to farmers, artisans and weavers who have taken loans from public sector banks and regional rural banks only. The State Governments have formulated similar schemes for cooperative banks. Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribes borrowers who are farmers, weavers and artisans are eligible for debt relief under the scheme. The objective of the ARDR Scheme was to provide debt relief to all farmers, landless labourers, weavers and rural artisans who had been subjected to distress and hardships and whose economic condition had been impaired and therefore were not in a position to repay the loans taken from banks.

(d) As on 1.2.1992, a total sum of Rs. 214.81 crores was sanctioned and released to the cooperatives in the State of Gujarat under the ARDR Scheme. The Scheme, which was put on operation w.e.f. May 15, 1990 has since come to a close on March 31, 1991.

(e) and (f) Yes, Sir. A request was received from the State Govt. of Gujarat seeking extension of the period of repayment of the loans beyond the stipulated period of three years. The proposal was, however, not agreed to by the Reserve Bank of India as the terms of the loans were already concessional.

Foreign Exchange Department of State Bank of India

1942. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Foreign Exchange Department of the State Bank of India was entrusted with all aspects of foreign exchange matter;

(b) whether, it is also a fact that some of the functions carried on by Foreign Exchange Department from its inception, viz., Final Foreign Exchange rate quotation (Break even), Project Calculation and Cover Operations have been entrusted to other departments;

(c) whether such a change would affect Bank's profitability; and

(d) if so, whether these activities would be restored to Foreign Exchange Department in Calcutta?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Shifting of Foreign Exchange Department of SBI from Calcutta

1943. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government and the State Bank of India Management Committee in 1987, not to shift Foreign Exchange Department from Calcutta;

(b) if so, whether the decentralisation of certain functions of the Foreign Exchange Department in Calcutta is in contravention to the commitment; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (A) State Bank of India (SBI) have reported that there is no proposal to shift the foreign exchange department from Calcutta.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.